

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6108

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14209

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, RH

SUBJECT: UK ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARD RHODESIAN
SOLUTION

1. DURING DISCUSSION OF PROSPECTS FOR REPEAL OF BYRD AMENDMENT (SEPTTEL), EMBOFF ASKED BYATT, HEAD SOUTH AFRICAN DEPARTMENT FCO, WHAT IMPACT OIL EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTHERN AFRICA AND RECENT FALL OFF IN IMMIGRATION WOULD HAVE ON NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN IAN SMITH AND BISHOP MUZOREWA. BYATT RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HMG HAS MADE NO ASSESSMENT THUS FAR OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON RHODESIAN ECONOMY OF A CURTAILMENT OF OIL DELIVERIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT, LIKE SOUTH AFRICA, A VERY LARGE PART OF RHODESIA'S ENERGY COMES FROM COAL OR HYDRO-ELECTRIC SOURCES. HOWEVER, HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME ADVERSE EFFECT WHICH WOULD FURTHER WEAKEN RHODESIA'S ECONOMIC POSITION. AS FOR IMMIGRATION, BYATT SAID THAT A SERIOUS SITUATION HAS BEEN DEVELOPING SINCE THE FIRST OF THIS YEAR WHEN IMMIGRATION FIGURES TOOK A SHARP DOWNWARD PLUNGE. IN FACT, FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER THERE WAS A NET LOSS OF 100. (IN A CONVERSA-
TION WITH EMBOFF AND AF/S DIRECTOR O'NEILL IN LATE
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SEPTEMBER, PETER NIESEWAND, "GUARDIAN" CORRESPONDENT WHO

HAD BEEN EDUCATED IN RHODESIA, SAID THAT VIRTUALLY NONE OF HIS SCHOOLMATES NOW ARE STILL LIVING IN RHODESIA).

2. BYATT THEN WENT ON TO ENUMERATE PRESSURES WHICH HE BELIEVES ARE WORKING ON SMITH REGIME TO MOVE IT TOWARD AN EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT WITH ANC:

A) THE POOR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE TO WHICH SANCTIONS ARE MAKING SOME CONTRIBUTION;

B) THE CONTINUING INSURGENCY WHICH HAS BEEN CONTAINED BUT NOT PUT DOWN;

C) SHARP FALL OFF IN WHITE IMMIGRATION;

D) RAPIDLY RISING BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT.

3. DESPITE THESE PRESSURES, BYATT BELIEVES THAT MOVEMENT TOWARD AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SMITH REGIME AND THE ANC WILL BE SLOW AND PAINFUL. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE REPORTS EMANATING FROM VARIOUS SOURCES TO THE EFFECT THAT A DRAFT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CIRCULATED AMONG THE ANC LEADERSHIP BY BISHOP MUZOREWA. THE MOST HE THINKS SMITH AND THE BISHOP MAY HAVE AGREED UPON IS A GENERAL STATEMENT IDENTIFYING THE AREAS IN WHICH SOME ACCOMMODATION OF THE VIEWS OF THE OTHER PARTY WILL BE NECESSARY BEFORE FINAL AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED. IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS, BYATT SAID, COMPLETE SILENCE HAS EMANATED FROM SALISBURY REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE SMITH-MUZOREWA TALKS. HE TAKES THIS TO MEAN THAT CONTACT AND PERHAPS EVEN NEGOTIATION IS CONTINUING. FACT THAT BOTH PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN MOVED ENOUGH TO KEEP UP REGULAR CONTACTS IS DEFINITELY A GAIN IN HMG'S VIEW, BUT BYATT SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN HIS MIND THAT THERE WAS STILL A WIDE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES.

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